

To: Enck, Judith[Enck.Judith@epa.gov]
From: Mears, Mary
Sent: Fri 1/29/2016 2:18:07 PM
Subject: CNN

Follow up from CNN.

Mary Mears

Deputy Director Public Affairs and Chief Public Outreach Branch

U.S. EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, the US VI and eight Indian Nations)

(212) 637-3673 (Direct Office)

(212) 637-3660 (General Office)

(646) 369-0077 (Cell)

From: Assefa, Haimy [mailto:Haimy.Assefa@turner.com]
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2016 9:09 AM
To: Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov>
Cc: Martin, John <Martin.JohnJ@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Follow up to John Martin's email to you

Good morning Mary and John,

Would you be able to clear up the discrepancy in terms of when the EPA was notified regarding PFOA in Hoosick? As I mentioned, the Village and Saint-Gobain claims the EPA knew as early as December of 2014.

Also, I noticed the statement yesterday with an advisory to avoid drinking or cooking with water with PFOA levels at 100 parts per trillion or higher. Can either of you talk me through that guidance? I'm trying to better understand the potential hazards of drinking water containing PFOA.

Thanks!

Haimy

From: Assefa, Haimy
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov>
Cc: Martin, John <Martin.JohnJ@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Follow up to John Martin's email to you

Hello,

Thank you both for getting back to me. According to the village's timeline and the company that caused the contamination, **Saint-Gobain provides notice of the sampling results to the EPA in 2014.**

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 28, 2016, at 5:35 PM, Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Haimy,

I wanted to just supplement John's answer with more detail in case you wanted it. Attached is the email that Judith received from the County Executive on October 15. Also, the Albany Times Union did a good timeline of the entire issue that you might find useful. It's cut and pasted below.

From Times Union (January 19):

Times Union

Timeline of Hoosick Falls water danger

January 19, 2016

Hoosick Falls residents face a growing concern that their water may have been contaminated for decades with Perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, a toxic chemical linked to kidney and testicular cancer, as well as thyroid diseases. The PFOA may have seeped into the village's underground wells over a period of decades from a nearby plastics plant.

- A string of rare cancer deaths in Hoosick Falls has residents concerned about their water supply. Click through the slideshow to view a timeline of how this issue has developed.
- Starting in the 1940s: Perfluorooctanoic acid, or "PFOA," has been used since the 1940s to manufacture industrial and household products such as non-stick coatings and heat-resistant wiring. It has been linked to kidney and testicular cancer, as well as thyroid diseases.
- 2006: The EPA reached an agreement with DuPont and other manufacturers to stop producing or using PFOA. The agreement came less than a year after DuPont agreed to pay

\$10.25 million in civil penalties to settle a complaint brought by the EPA regarding the company's PFOA pollution in the Midwest.

- DuPont continued producing PFOA because the agreement did not call for the end of production of the chemical until 2015.

- In Hoosick Falls, it is believed this toxic chemical may have seeped into the village's underground wells over a period of decades when workers at a nearby plastics plant cleaned smokestack filters and other equipment on the ground outside the facility, including flushing manufacturing byproducts into a storm drain.

- Several people who worked at the McCaffrey Street plant recalled how a powder-like smoke plume that seemed heavier than air often settled in the valley around the small plant. The facility is several hundred yards from the village's water treatment plant.

- Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, which purchased the plant at McCaffrey Street in 1999, said they phased out its use of PFOA more than 10 years ago amid growing international concerns about the chemical's health and environmental effects.

- Through the years, many stories have surfaced about Hoosick Falls residents who have suffered and died from rare cancers. Wilbert J. Allard (in photo), who lived in Hoosick Falls since the 1960s, died in May 2011 at the age of 81 from an aggressive form of thyroid cancer. His wife, Elizabeth, who lived in the village since 1962, died at 54 from pancreatic cancer.

- March 2014: Michael Hickey, an insurance underwriter who grew up in the village and still lives there, started researching the village's cancer rates after the death of Isabel M. McGuire, a 48-year-old math teacher at Hoosick Falls High School. She died 14 months after the cancer death of Hickey's father, John.

- In that same year, Dr. Marcus E. Martinez was diagnosed with an aggressive and rare form of cancer. Following surgery and chemotherapy, Martinez said his prognosis is good, but he remains suspicious of the village's water supply. He said he has seen an extraordinarily high number of cases of aggressive cancer and thyroid diseases in the village's population.

- Hickey used his own money to purchase testing kits from a Canadian company to test for PFOA levels in water, but was prevented by the mayor, David B. Borge, from retrieving samples of raw water from the water plant. Undeterred, he collected water samples from his kitchen sink and other locations and submitted them. Results showed that the water in his home had PFOA levels well above the federal guideline for safe drinking water.

- After Hickey presented his results to the mayor, Borge expressed concern about the stigma the apparent water pollution may have on the village's efforts to revitalize its struggling downtown area, part of a campaign called "Hoosick Rising."

- Hickey and other residents formed a grass-roots group, Healthy Hoosick Water, and pressured the village and Saint-Gobain to conduct their own tests. Results mirrored Hickey's and Saint-Gobain recorded PFOA levels of 18,000 parts per trillion (ppt) in the groundwater under its McCaffrey Street plant. The EPA advisory level for short-term exposure is 400 ppt.

- November 2015: Saint-Gobain makes free bottled water available to residents of Hoosick Falls through Tops Friendly Markets and agrees to pay \$2 million to install a carbon filter at the water treatment plant.

- November 2015: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent Hoosick Falls Mayor David B. Borge a terse letter warning that the village's water is unsafe for human consumption. The EPA also urged the mayor to take down what the agency said is

inaccurate and misleading information on the village's website about the potential health effects of PFOA.

- December 2015: Tensions remained between many residents and the Village Board, which declined to meet with members of Healthy Hoosick Water, whose leaders include Hickey and Martinez.

- At a recent public information meeting on the water situation at Immaculate Conception Church on Wednesday Dec. 2, 2015, and at a Village Board meeting a week later, the mayor and other village leaders declined to hand out copies of the EPA's letter.

- Many residents who attended the meeting said the event was confusing.

- Two state Health Department officials handed out "fact sheets" to residents at the meeting that said "health effects are not expected to occur from normal use of the water."

- Later that month, the EPA issued a statement warning residents in Hoosick Falls not to drink or cook with village water. In response, the village's mayor reversed his position, and adopted the EPA's recommendation. The state Health Department also recommended that village residents only drink bottled water.

- Meanwhile, Saint-Gobain officials said there has been no determination on the source of the contamination. They say soil-testing they did around the McCaffrey Street plant showed low levels of PFOA in the soil, which may indicate water pollution came from a source other than their plant.

- Healthy Hoosick Water continued to push for government agencies to conduct a health survey to determine whether cancer and other illnesses in the village can be attributed to the PFOA pollution. The group also called on the state or EPA to determine the source of the pollution and how far it may have spread.

- The EPA also pushed for a deep study of Hoosick Falls' water pollution. Judith Enck, regional administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said state and federal agencies are in early discussions about how to undertake an investigation in Hoosick Falls, which may include health surveys.

- January 2016: Village trustees voted to have temporary filters installed on the water system, until the long-term plan to install a charcoal filter system expected to remove PFOA from the water, funded by Saint-Gobain, is set to be done later this year. Saint-Gobain officials said their decision to help the village does not represent any acknowledgement of responsibility for the PFOA pollution.

- January 2016: Judith Enck, Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator, hosted a meeting to hear community concerns. Earlier in the day, the state departments of Environmental Conservation and Health requested the EPA add the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp. plant and other possible sources of contamination in Hoosick Falls to the National Priorities List under the federal Superfund program and investigate contamination sources.

- Enck told the standing-room only crowd, "A very detailed study of groundwater is needed in Hoosick Falls to know what we are dealing with and how to best address it," she told the audience. "There also needs to be sampling in the Hoosic River."

- Also at the meeting, David Engel, a lawyer for the grassroots group, Healthy Hoosick Water, referred to Michael Hickey as a "hero."

- Here are a few more photos from the Hoosick Falls water hearing. Residents attend a public meeting about PFOA contamination in the village's water system.

- Suzanne DiDonato poses her question about PFOA contamination in the water system.

- Toxicologist Dr. Mark Maddaloni addresses questions on PFOA contamination in the village of Hoosick Falls.
- Toxicologist Dr. Bob Michaels speaks during a public meeting to address PFOA contamination in the village of Hoosick Falls.
- High school senior Jeff Brewer, 17, poses his question about PFOA contamination in the water system.
- Judith Enck, Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator for Region 2, center with microphone, addresses questions on PFOA contamination in the village of Hoosick Falls.
- Scores attend the EPA's informational hearing on the Hoosick Falls water system.
- A standing-room only audience attends a public meeting about PFOA contamination in the village's water system.

PHOTO CREDITS: BY PAUL BUCKOWSKI, MICHAEL P. FARRELL, CINDY SCHULTZ, MARIE D. DE JESUS, ASSOCIATED PRESS, SETH PERLMAN

Mary Mears

Deputy Director Public Affairs and Chief Public Outreach Branch
U.S. EPA Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, the US VI and eight Indian Nations)
(212) 637-3673 (Direct Office)
(212) 637-3660 (General Office)
(646) 369-0077 (Cell)

<email and attachment from county executive on Hoosick.pdf>